

T News Letter **TDARS**

G3ZME
G6ZME

TELFORD AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

www.TDARS.org.uk

FOUNDED 1969

www.TelfordHamfest.co.uk

Issue 255

Jan/Feb 2013

www.TDARS.org.uk

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

- January 16** "Morse Fun" - it should be - M/C Richard G0VXG with ideas!
- January 23** Indoor Bowls—with the Little Wenlock crowd next door ...
- January 30** Video Evening. Come and find out what is lined up
- February 6** Committee Meeting and HF/VHF station on air (GX3ZME)
- February 13** Under-a-Fiver (£5) Construction Competition. Why not have-a-go ?
- February 20** The Club's new Elecraft KX3 Tcvr.: + bring your own project along
- February 27** Contest / Portable / Event planning for 2013
- March 6** Committee and pre-agm meeting. GX3ZME on-the-air HF/VHF
- March 13** Main Construction Competition + Novice Builder's Award
- March 20** Lenses—the How and Why with Bob M0RJS
- March 27** ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
- April 3** Committee Meeting & GX3ZME on-the-air HF / VHF
- April 10** Table Top Sale. Sell all your unwanted bits and kit .
- April 17** The 'new' bands—472KHz and 5 MHz: What it's all about
- April 24** 1st. 2 metre walking DF Hunt. Starts at 7:30pm

For Amateur Radio Exam Training—enquiries to Mike G3JKX (01952 299677)
For Morse Training and Morse Proficiency Tests Martyn G3UKV or Eric M0KZB.
For Equipment Loans & Returns contact Ricky M0RKY or Simon 2E0CHV

Radio Amateur Exams- Latest: www.tdars.org.uk/html/trainingFoundation.html

VILLAGE HALL, MALTHOUSE BANK, LITTLE WENLOCK, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE. TF6 5BG

Editorial

But, it wouldn't have happened if there had been no-one to take on the mantle. So, it's also a big THANK YOU to Rob M0TOY for taking on the role. I hope members will continue to support Rob in the same way that Don says he has been supported over the years. Contributions, comments and content now go to Rob, either at his regular e-mail, or preferably to the new e-mail contact web@tdars.org.uk **MIV**

[illegible]

Our Society Web Site www.tdars.org.uk

I am handing over the running of our website to Rob MOTOY. I do thank you for all the support that you have given me over the last 7 years.

I am sure that Rob will take the site to higher levels and has already done a lot of work in the background.

You can contact Rob at web@tdars.org.uk with your comments, images and reports on club activity.

Thanks Rob for helping me by taking over this work.

73 to ALL

Don S. MOFHM

TELFORD & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN: Derek Southey G0EYX (01785 604904)

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Martyn Vincent (01952 255416)

SECRETARY: Mike Street G3JKX (01952 299677)

TREASURER: Jim Wakenell G8UGL (01952 684173)

CURATOR : Ricky Brown M0RKY (01952 411793 or 07947 351980)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416)

PUBLICITY : Dave GOCER (01630 638699 or 07971 416940, leave msg)

Committee: Richard G0VXG; Simon G0UFE; Eric M0KZB; Martin 2E0TRO; Rob M0TOY; Peter 2E0ZSU;

Trophies/Certs: G3UKV & M1RKH. QSL Manager David M0PNN; Assist. Curator: Simon 2E0CHV (01588 673053)

Qtc: News & Information



TDARS MEETINGS EVERY WEDNESDAY AT LITTLE WENLOCK VILLAGE HALL UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE ON THE FRONT PAGE PROGRAMME.

ROOM BOOKED FROM 7PM - 10PM.

MEETINGS USUALLY COMMENCE AT 8PM

TDARS Terriers meet from 6:30 pm

Please return borrowed equipment promptly

Club Projects are taking shape, on a sort of mix 'n match basis. Bench Power Supply—Various designs to suit individual needs. Contact M0TOY or G3UKV. QRP ATU—Emtech ZM kit—contact M0PNN. HF Delta Loop - contact G0UFE. Accurate QRP-ometer (SWR/Power meter)- contact G8UGL.

Borrowing equipment. The usual loan period is one week, but some items, such as antennas, books or specific test gear may be loaned for longer where appropriate—just ask. Richy M0RKY has also asked for any equipment or books that have been borrowed on a longer term to be returned by the end of February so that he can undertake his annual audit of all TDARS items before the AGM.



Congratulations to the latest Intermediate and Foundation licencees: Don 2E0DSN, Ian 2E0IZP, Sarah M6TZE and Shannon M6CFP. Also to Dave Bowen 2W0ZJA who is now MW0UAA, and Becky (age 12) his daughter who is now MW6ZOL. A new Foundation course will take place in February. See Website or contact Mike G3JKX for further information.

Remember the two **TDARS Construction Competitions** coming up: Feb.13 for the 'Under a Fiver' where the parts (excluding PSU, case, knobs etc) cost no more than £5, and the Main Construction event on March 13, where anything goes, but there is a special novice construction trophy for the best project made by someone new to building electronic gear. You are also invited to bring along your winter project, including any problems you may have met, to the meeting on February 20, when the club's new Elecraft KX3 will also be demonstrated.

The excellent video from the TDARS trip to Guernsey last August can be seen on www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsWnUumE0WE&feature=youtu.be. Thanks to Paul 'PNN' (and probably others incl. Dave 'VZT') for this epic.



International Marconi Day (IMD)

21 April 2012

The same day as other members collected the National Club of the Year 2011 Trophy

TYWYN

Cardigan Bay

20th April 2013

—here we come!

Mike's Piece Jan 2013

I had a man telephone me from a village 20 miles SE of Aberystwyth! Could I do the practical parts of the Foundation exam whilst his wife did some shopping in Telford? That's a long way to come to go to Next I thought, but yes, I could.

He duly arrived and we spent three hours going through all he needed to do, including the on-the-air QSO with the required mode & frequency changes. On HF the Aerial Matching Unit (ATU) has to be tuned up on the frequency in use. I stressed the importance of this because failure to do this well results in the TX output signal being chopped up when using SSB mode. If you do not know why this happens, read on.

Most modern rigs shut themselves down when the VSWR rises above 2.5:1. So, if you have tuned up your antenna system on 3.6MHz and then QSY up to try and work some DX up at the 3.8MHz end, then the SWR is going to be quite high there. You speak into the microphone and the rig now produces RF output. But, because the aerial system is mistuned, the rig recognizes a poor match and shuts the PA down to protect itself from the high standing wave voltage which might damage it. But now the VSWR disappears because there is no Tx output, so the protection circuit turns the PA on again. The rest of the first word is now producing RF output again and the same process happens all over again, with all the subsequent words being chopped up.

If you hear a signal like this on the air, be a sport and give them a call and put them right. Forgetting to retune the AMU is quite easy to forget and yes, I am as guilty as anyone. Maybe an automatic AMU is the answer, but who has £100 - £350 to spend on one? One answer is a manually tuned AMU with a lower Q. If it had that, there'd be poorer harmonic filtering and more losses, but you would only have to tune up once in the centre of each band; just like the fixed tuned PA filters of your rig. You pays your money.....

A very happy New Year 2013

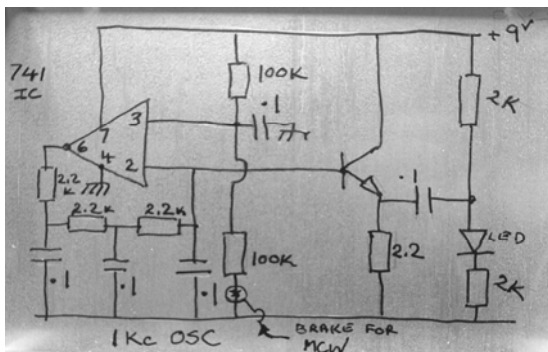
Vy 73 Mike G3JKX

[illegible]

Nanowave Alignment and Test Beacon sent by Dave G8VZT

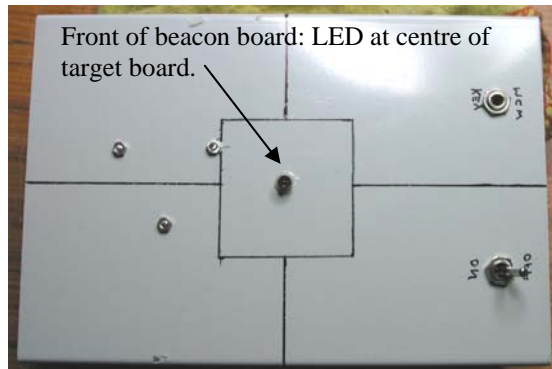
Dave has built two of these 'red light' nanowave beacons, and has kindly donated the prototype to help TDARS members align their nanowave light-comms transceivers.—Ed.

CIRCUIT



The 741 chip is used as a 1KHz tone to modulate the red LED, via the transistor driver. The LED is biased so that it barely lights up at all (ie very QRPP).

Set up the board about 15ft. from your nanowave tcvr, so that you clearly hear the 1KHz tone (which can be keyed—see cct). This should be done in a darkened room (or at night). This proves your rx is reasonably sensitive. Then rotate your tcvr to the tx position (180 deg), switch to transmit, and your red tx output light should very closely align with the LED on the beacon board. If it misses, re-align the tx diode on your tcvr as necessary. **THIS ALIGNMENT BOARD IS AVAILABLE TO ALL :** contact Martyn G3UKV if you wish to borrow it, or build your own!



UK Activity Contests 2012 for TDARS by Dave G0CER

The UKAC contests have really taken off and this year club members have improved the club's standing – albeit against quite a few specialist clubs who only exist for contesting.

The last three years overall position and points (all bands 50MHz to SHF)

2010	2011	2012
18 th (80 entries)	18 th (97 entries)	21 st (113 entries)
TDARS Points		
Total 268 points	Total 444 points	Total 518 points

A quick look at the league tables showed that one of the major groups pushing us down in 2012 is the Travelling Wave Contest Group who were very strong and came in 3rd this year – along with high entries of Tall Trees CG and Northern CG in the top 20 this year shows, the contest is hotting up! The club has remained stable in the top section despite the numbers increasing year on year.

Band	2011	2012	TDARS Members entering in 2012
6m	20 th out of 56	24 th out of 74	G0CER, G8UGL, M0RJS
4m	12 th out of 31	16 th out of 37	G0CER, G3UKV
2m	32 nd out of 78	35 th out of 92	G0CER, 2E0CHV/P 2E0DTB
70cm	21 st out of 70	28 th out of 64	G0CER, G3UKV, 2E0DTB, G8UGL, M0TOY, M0PNN, G3JKX
23cm	31 st out of 32	21 st out of 37	G3UKV, G8UGL
SHF	7 th out of 9	8 th out of 11	GP3ZME/P G3UKV (GP /p @10GHz placed 9 ^{of} 14)

And thanks to Dave Hall G8VZT for coming on giving contacts away too.. Sorry if I forgot anyone else.

What to read from this?

I'm sure more mathematically minded folk can pick over the bones better than I – but given that our resources last year were most available on 70cm (I expected 2m for some reason). Martyn's SHF activity and the max points we got on the GP3ZME/P station moved us further away from the bottom in a very tight section. All section entry levels are up – so if we were to target bands at what we're good at – then 2m would be a target – but in all honesty we can't beat the specialist contest groups – perhaps aim to increase activity across the board? Perhaps look at boosting 2 metres - a wide field there or perhaps anyone got 4 meters equipment? The lower entry numbers might improve our position possibility?

Don't forget holidays!

I took my FT817 on holiday to Yorkshire and agreed an evening on air in a lovely location on a hill – the 6m halo worked well despite being a too heavy for the fishing rod really – I heard more than could hear me but got some points in.

Do you want to take part – but are unsure what to do or have no equipment

There are members who go portable for whom an extra pair of hands logging for experience is a great way to get the contest 'bug' (help out on a band you don't know yet?).

Shout out at the club or on the Yahoo group – and see what members can do

Anyway – thanks to all those taking part in the UKAC – hope to work you and enjoy the band activity being a bit manic for while.

~~~~~  
**Tip from Richard G0VXG:** I had to go to the dentist the other day and noticed the dentist was wearing a "LED headlight" The light in my shack is not brilliant (pun intended), so tried the same idea whilst soldering some SMD components. It worked really well and got the light just where it was needed!

**THANKS for lots of Newsletter** input this time from John M0JZH, Mike G3JKX, David M0YDH, Dave G3YXM, Richard G0VXG, Dave G8VZT, Simon G0UFE, Paul M0PNN, Dave G0CER, Richy M0RKY. Next Newsletter #256 will be prepared in early March.

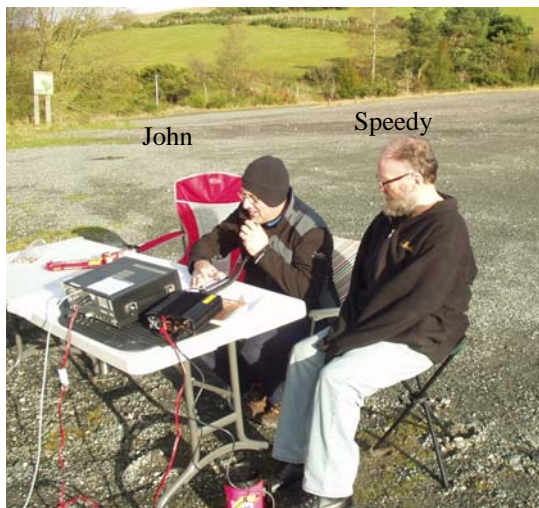
**Working Portable from “The Bog” 23/11/12**  
**Speedy 2E0KLS, Simon 2E0CHV & John M0JZH** (author of this article).

“The Bog” is an abandoned lead mining village near to the Stiperstones, started in the 1730's and active up until 1922; however all that is left now is the restored school house and three incomplete walls of the village hall.

The location for our portable operations was chosen for its ease of access, space to erect antennas and also of course something to do with the comic value of its name – it would be sure to draw in some curious fellow amateurs.

Myself and Simon through 2012 have taken to working SOTA, however rather than going out with our rucksacks, we decided to work with something a little more substantial but what? We decided to work something along the lines of a Special Event Station, operating a station at 100W from a location with some history, something to reveal from its past, but we felt we needed a call-sign (Thank you Jim G8UGL) GX6ZME/P and it worked.

We were set up for just after 10am, and worked through to about 3pm. During that time we had very few occasions to call CQ, we seemed to have a constant stream of people just waiting to talk to us on 40m, some people indeed were talking to us as if we were a special event station and were interested to hear what we had to say – puns and all(!) - about our location and its history. We were pleased to make contact with several club members Dave 2E0DTB, Simon G0UFE, Don 2E0DSN and Ray 2E1HTU.



The majority of our contacts were on 40m and employed a relaxed style of operating taking time to talk with our contacts at the rate of about 10 contacts per hour. Our most unusual contact of the day was made by Simon towards the end of our day, scanning the bands/frequencies found and held a QSO with WB8KRY, Joe in Cleveland Ohio on 10m **AM** on 50W. There was only one way to end the day – with a marvellous real ale at the Bridges Inn.

We have said that we would like to do this type of portable operation again, and we will once again be working the same site on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February** and would like to invite you along to join us, and hopefully bands permitting, we will have a day at least as good as the one that we had in November.

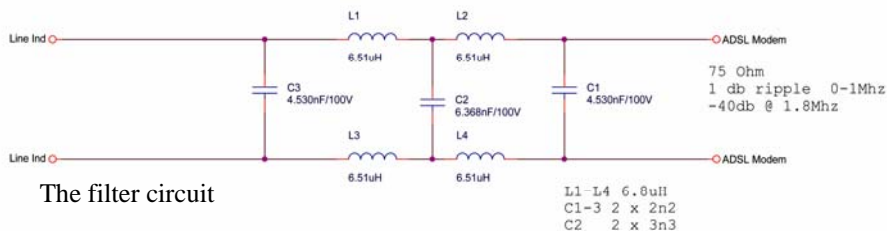
***It is our hope to go out about once a month on this type of operation throughout the year, and once again we would be very pleased for you to join with us.***

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Just a quick reminder, As we are in winter project mode, that through an arrangement from where I work, I can order items from CPC and Farnell with about a 16% discount. Only requirement is that the order value is at least £20 before VAT. Postage is free.

If you want to check what is available have a look at : : www.onecall.farnell.com and get in touch with product codes and I'll confirm the cost and current availability - as I said it's about 16% off the listed price you will see on the site.

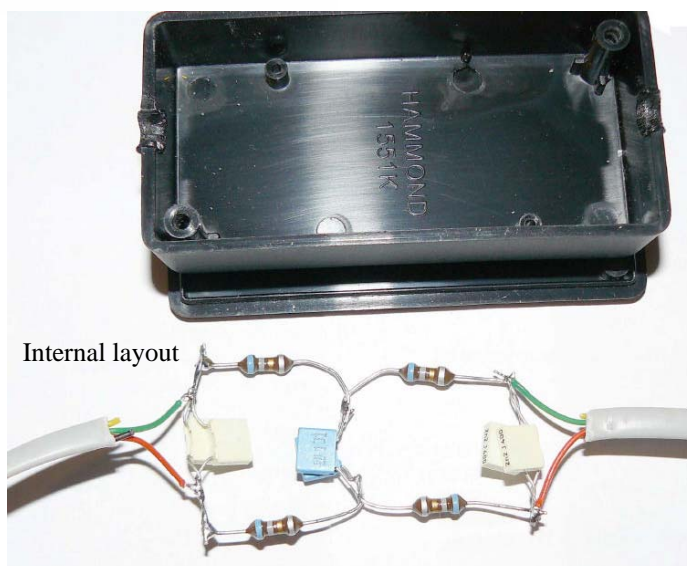
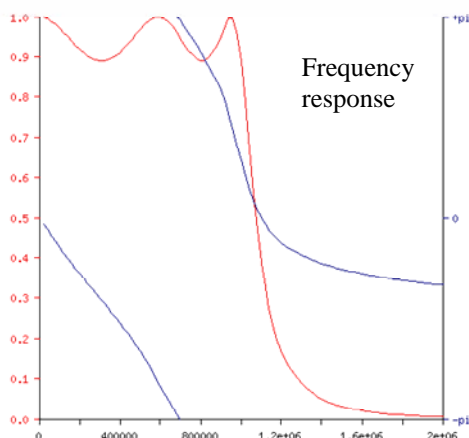
Regards Martyn 2E0CTG



The filter circuit

ADSL phone-line filter

by
David G3YXM



Editor's Note:

Following a QSO with Dave G3YXM

on top band (160m), where we discussed how our 160m (and 80m) transmitters tended to knock out, or drastically reduce, the speed of our ADSL internet links for hours or even days, Dave sent me this circuit of an ADSL filter that should work.

Note that the C1, C2 and C3 values are achieved by paralleling up pairs of common value Cs. The filter's placed in the phone line "twisted copper pair" as it enters the house, straight after the Master junction box. Thanks Dave for this circuit.

Christmas with the Elecraft KX3 transceiver by Simon G0 UFE

Every year I make two lists before Christmas, one is what I would like and one is what I want. I will come back to these later.

At the club meeting on the 19th December I was asked By Martyn G3UKV if I would like to try the new club rig, an Elecraft KX3, over the Christmas holiday "Yes please" I said, and after quickly taking it out of his hand, I gave him his arm back. Mine all mine for two weeks.

They say that nice things come in small packages; the XYL is 4ft 11in and size 6, so the KX3 being about the same size as a house brick but weighing a lot less sounded really nice and is packed with lots of features.

I suggest that the operator first sits down and reads the manual because you can set it up in different ways depending on whether you are using Data, CW or Voice.

I am going to comment on the voice modes and leave the Data and CW operators to comment on them later.

To switch the radio on, you have to press the BAND and ATU TUNE buttons at the same time and again to switch off; this is so it doesn't turn on in your bag by accident. The controls are fairly straight forward and easy to use. I press two buttons and we now have voices coming out of the speaker on 40M. The speaker in the KX3 is small but ok for portable use or even in the shack when its quiet, but having read somewhere in the manual that its suggests putting the audio through an amplified speaker system, using an 'aux input', or use head phones, "ermmm" I thought "I have an old MP3 amp in the garage I wonder if that could be used?". 10 minutes later the KX3 was connected to the amp, three quarters volume on the amp and only number 5 setting on the rig, and it sounded great.



Back in the book I read you can also change what it sounds like. There are three settings, Off, Delay or Pitch, each giving a different sound from the speakers. And if you used it mobile you could run the audio through your car stereo if it has an aux input. And don't bother with expensive headphones, I got some from the pound shop on the Wellington Retail Park and they only cost..... you got it.....99pence.

The KX3 internal ATU was ok with my 40/80M dipole but could not match it on 20M so I connected it to my LDG AT-100 auto tuner, still not quite right, back to the book. It seems the KX3 ATU and the LDG tuner were working against each other, so I pressed the menu button and turned the KX3 internal ATU off, problem gone.

Now one small problem with the KX3 is it is only 12 watts max output; getting heard may take some time, or so I thought, but tuning round 20M I heard Juan EA3BOX calling CQ, "G0UFE QRP for you" I called, amazingly he came straight back with the reply and gave a 56 report and said "the audio was very good". So now back to 40M, Mike F5VIG, in Brittany was next with a 59 and "sounds very, very good" comment. The following stations were worked on the 26th December, Robert F5RHD/P, Gerald PA3GEG, IZ0OWO, Erik ON85RKL a special event station, Phillipe F1RCX and all giving good reports. The worst was a 47 with QSB from F1RCX.

Friday 28th December the 09.00 80m net saw contacts with Martyn G3UKV, Phil 2E0GIV, Bob M0RJS and Jim G4DZL over in Loughborough, all gave good signal and audio reports. Further contacts on the 29th and 31st saw Dave M0TAZ, in Hornchurch, and Tim EI/G2YC, in Baltimore Southern Ireland in the log. It was amazingly good, considering the low output, how easily some of the contacts were made and it is this class of rig which will be of much benefit to the SOTA and portable operators in our club.

Finally I must mention the filtering because it is brilliant. You can alter it to make the speech much clearer and, along with the RF gain control, remove QRM/QRN.

I have had a lot of fun with this radio over Christmas and it was well worth spending the Club of The Year award money on it.

So back to my two lists; would I like one or want one ?

I WANT ONE, I WANT ONE.

Simon G0UFE

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**Emtech ZM-2 Atu (Antenna Matching Unit)** by Paul M0PNN

I have been looking for a small portable QRP ATU to take on holiday or use when portable. The **ZM-2 (Z-Match type tuner)** is rated at 15 watts max input power and will tune the frequency range 3.5Mhz to 30Mhz. The **ZM-2** is a compact 5-1/16" x 2-5/8" x 1-5/8" and weighs only 8 oz. The **Zm-2** will tune long wire antennas and balanced antennas using 300 Ohm, 450 Ohm ladder line, and unbalanced coax fed antennas. While purchasing, you are given the option to select BNC or SO-239 Sockets for input/output.

I ordered the kit from Emtech at <http://emtech.steadynet.com/zm2.shtml> . It arrived two weeks later from the USA. The kit was well packed with the parts inside the ATU case for transport as shown in photo one. The building instructions and decals were also included.



Photo one.

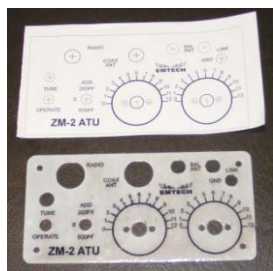


Photo two.



Photo three.

Photo two shows both sets of decals, one spare. The lower decal is fitted to the faceplate. Photo three shows the rest of the parts just after unpacking.



The first thing I did was buy some clear lacquer (Double Acrylic) from a local garage. After fitting the decal and cutting out the holes on the faceplate I sprayed the surface of the decal with the clear lacquer building up layers slowly. This will give some protection against water and dirt. Be careful when spraying or the decal will run which happened to mine but not too badly. There are some great tips, photographs, and YouTube videos on the Emtech website here <http://emtech.steadynet.com/zm2.shtml> to help with the build.

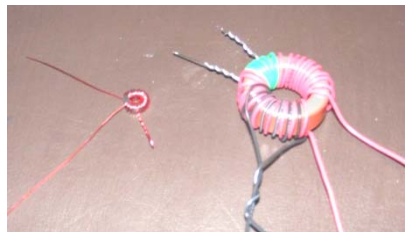


Photo four.



Photo five.

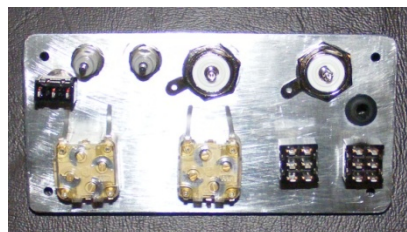


Photo six.

Photo four showing T1 a T-130 toroid (large red/grey toroid) and T2 smaller SWR indicator toroid wound ready for fitting. Photos five and six show front and rear of **ZM-2** with grommet for SWR indicator diode fixed in position. Tuning capacitors minus knobs, SO-239 sockets, balanced antenna connectors, switches for link, extra capacitance, tune/operate. The SO-239 sockets need to be tight but not so tight as to damage the decal. The balanced antenna connectors also need to be tight. Use a small screw driver to hold the connector's holes central while tightening.



Photo seven.



Photo eight.

Photo seven shows the **ZM-2** with the basic wiring done. The 100 ohm resistors added in pairs to make 50 Ohms. Be careful to check the value after soldering together. The 500pf cap is added between the switches, and the SWR indicator diode is in place. In photo eight the basic wiring plus polystyrene foam glued in place with epoxy to hold the toroids in place.

Photos nine and ten show the completed **ZM-2** with the toroids fitted and epoxy used to fix in place. Extra epoxy was used around the so-239 sockets and balanced antenna connectors.

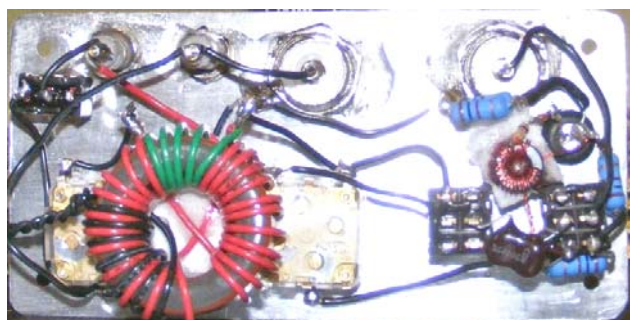


Photo nine.



Photo ten.

The **ZM-2** works very well. The tuning is sharp and easy. It will tune my 5/8 wave vertical for ten metres on all bands from eighty metres to ten metres. The indicator diode works well. A reduction of brightness of half indicates an SWR of below 1:5 and 1:1 if the diode goes completely out. To tune switch to 'operate', tune for maximum noise, switch to 'tune', fine tune for minimum led light (usually off), switch back to 'operate' and you're ready. All in all, after a bit of practise, it takes about a minute.

[Paul gives the cost for this ATU as £43.50 to your door, ordering direct, using PayPal.—Ed]

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Editor's Note: The last two articles for this Newsletter are from David, M0YDH.

The first was a circulating e-mail sent by David about his SOTA activation from Lawley hill and Caer Caradoc on December 7th.

The second an abridged article from David, sent to web based magazine called **Summitsbase** (www.summits.org.uk) which is worth a visit if you're interested in the SOTA, HuMPS and other similar outdoor activities.

David comments: "I've passed 500 activator points in SOTA so am half a goat. Goatdom in 2018 is a likely target! I'll try to put in an appearance at club soon. 20 Feb is a must as I'd like to get the KX3 up high later in the year." *Thanks and congratulations, David.*

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Activation report:

The Lawley G/HWB-035 is a lovely hill - from which to see waves of bad weather galloping across the plains! [The rainbows moving with the rain were rather fine.] There I spent a while personally horizontally polarised just on the lee side of the hill beneath my ground sheet. I'd made a shelter out of it by pegging the corners down and hid from the torrents of rain while I worked 7 stations on channel FE of 5MHz. After the rain stopped, I QSY'd to 7.150 where Ivan G4WIA offered to spot me on the DX cluster. 5 continental stations called me, but were all bemused by the HuMP concept [Hills Under 100m relative prominence]! I'm quite pleased with the performance of the inverted Vee dipole when the feed point is only 4m high and the ends are very close to the ground. I'm using a travel fishing rod that can be carried in a suitcase for foreign trips. I hope to do SOTA from alpine Bavaria during our family get-together over Christmas.

I descended and took the car to a new parking spot a mile away. After deciding against wimping out due to the poor weather, I set off up Caer Caradoc G/WB-006. It's a stiff climb avoided by the winter bonus crowd who rediscover the Shropshire highlands this time of the year because it's a lot of effort for a 1 pointer. I think Caradoc's Castle is a wonderful hill and I had every intention of making the most of the earthworks constructed by those folks at the turn of the previous millenium. Slowing down near the saddle due to the burning stitch in my side, I realised the wind was going to try and send me back to Wolverhampton. The climb to the fort was a little trying, but if I angled my rucsac, I became wind assisted. Once on top I found the shelter in the inner ditch was up to standard. I set up for 60m fairly certain that channel FE was being monitored by chasers. My first CQ SOTA was answered by regulars MW0IML and G6ODU, even though I was over an hour late compared to my alert time. I worked 12 stations in G, GW, GI, EI and PA. EI0DB was struggling with his Clansman set (2ND MILITARY SET in use today) due to a strong local carrier. Deep QSB was affecting all the stations. I was surprised to speak to Sake PA0SKP as I didn't know that Dutch stations had 60m. I closed at 1520 watching the dusk developing and was back at the car at 1605. For both descents I put on in-step crampons (Grivel Spiders) because close grazed, wet grass is a recipe for injury. I am good at getting hurt while descending.

So 90 miles of driving for a SOTA point and a HEMA unique and I loved it! Better than driving a desk all week.

73 es SD [safe descent] - David M0YDH

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Messing in the Mangfallgebirge by David M0YDH

My wife and I committed to spend Christmas with her parents in the German Alpine foothills back in April 2012. A quick glance at Google Earth with M1MAJ's SOTA summits file showed that the high cost of this trip for our family of four could be offset by some SOTA activations! Our holiday would be in the Mangfallgebirge region of Alpine Germany.

Preparation.

The Map Shop in Upton on Severn is probably the best place to start for any budding DX expedition. I purchased BY15 Mangfallgebirge Mitte and BY16 Mangfallgebirge Ost. It was like entering a new world with terrain mapping differences, Long and Lat, no national grid system and lots of skiing information. (How do you find position on a long and lat map against the value on your GPS? There are spot positions all over but in-between and a good insight into the summer culture of high level walking between alpine huts.

I purchased one of those 5m telescopic fishing poles to carry in the suitcase and two fireproof bags for my 3S LiPo batteries. I tested my low inverted Vee dipole on activations of G/CE-003, GW/NW-044 and GW/NW-051. I got satisfactory coverage on 20m SSB and decent signal reports despite the travel pole offering a feedpoint height of only 4 metres. For the Bavaria activations I decided 20m phone was to be my only band.

P1050350 David M0YDH
on DL MF-090 Schwarzenberg



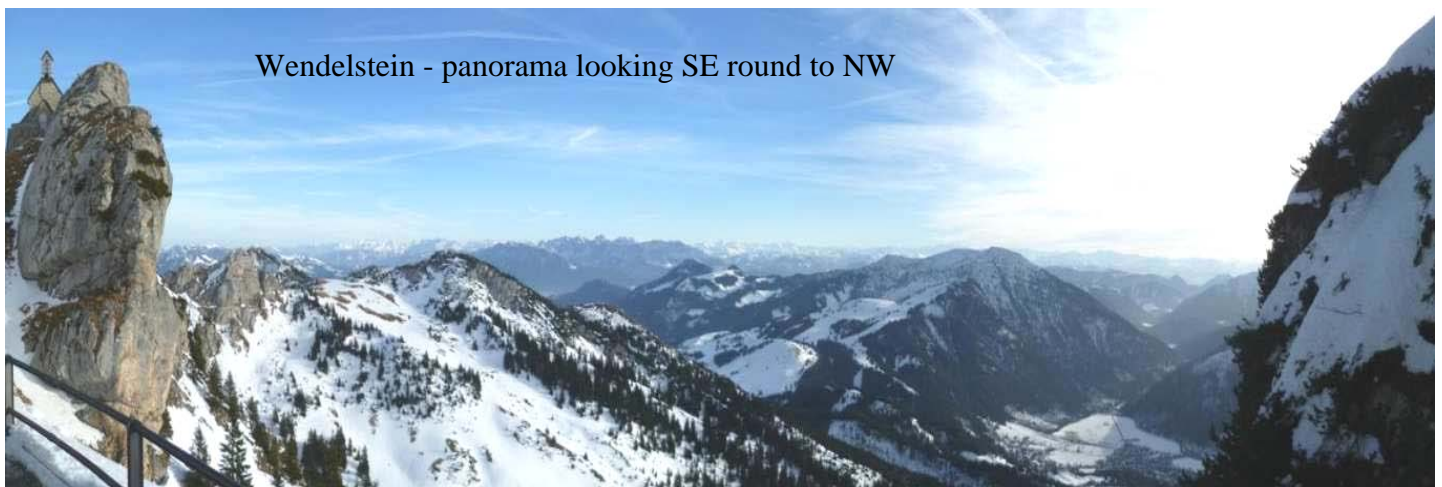
22 Dec 2012 Activation of DL/MF-090 Schwarzenberg - DL/M0YDH/P 1188m ASL

I was quickly ready and started on the 3km walk with around 350m of ascent. The valley floor is already between 700 and 800m. I walked the short way from Hundham to the hamlet of Schwarzenberg where I found the first set of yellow alpine walking finger posts. These give the walk time and colour dot used in trees along the trail. It's possible to do a clockwise or anti-clockwise circular walk from this village over the summit. I chose the latter and was rewarded with a steep access road climbing up to the Schwarzenberger Alm where an Alm is an alpine hut usually offering meals and drinks. This one had a tower crane on site so no *Apfelscholer* for me. I had my first view of the Wendelstein DL/MF-079 where we planned to go in a few days time.

The summit is a bare round top, just above a ring of trees, dominated by the crucifix complete with memorials to men lost in 3 wars. It commands views over the vast plains towards Munich to the north and all the alps that flank the Leitzachtal valley around Fischbachau to the south. There are two park benches. I fastened my antenna mast to one of these and simply pegged the dipole ends in the snow. I found a free frequency and alternated with calling CQ and filling out a text message to the MM0FMF self spot service. This worked well and Alej EA3HTJ answered the call. I worked 31 stations altogether in a 45 minute session on 14MHz SSB. Mainly G, GW and EA. One Slovakian and DX of the day Rich N4EX in Raleigh, North Carolina. I was spotted on the Telford and District ARS reflector too so four of the contacts were with my clubmates. The whole experience was brilliant and I hope I sounded as delighted as I felt. This was only the seventh activation of what ought to be a really popular hill for SOTA in DL with a good walk on a metalled road most of the way up and about an hour's drive from Munich. I said that this is miles better than activating G/WB-005 Long Mynd for the umpteenth time even though it is slightly higher than GM/WS-004 and the same 2 + 3 points! I returned by the same route and was home for 4 o'clock in Hundham.

24 Dec 2012 DL/MF-079 Wendelstein - DL/M0YDH/P Points: 8 Bonus: 3

To my sons' dismay a general thaw set in so the sledges went unused. Also the Föhn wind had started blowing bringing very warm air from Africa and there was blue sky! A call to the Wendelsteinbahn office confirmed that the cable car was running and Gerhard, my father-in-law, offered to drive us the 10 miles towards Bayerischzell to get to the valley station. The family return ticket of 44 Euros seemed reasonable value compared to say the Snowdon Mountain Railway. We ascended a 1000m in under ten minutes to the summit station with an exciting lurch at the mid-span tower. My heart sank when I saw that the panorama way and route to the summit were posted as officially closed. I climbed the summit route as far as I could, passing the *Weg Gesperrt* sign, till I got to the snow filled rock tunnel and could go no further. I believe I got within the 100m vertical activation zone permitted by the DL association. Two independent local walkers confirmed I was about there. I fastened my antenna to the handrails and sat facing the immense, radiant panorama of German and Austrian alps stretching out to the far horizon. My CQ was answered by Bill G4WSB. There were 32 callers from G, GW, GM, EI, EA, CT. I had a ground wave S2S contact with Stephan DM1LE/P on the next mountain Breitenstein DL/MF-070. When Robert GW0PEB/P called from his greenhouse in Criccieth, we gave the Welsh language a rare airing on European amateur radio. I bet that confused the Spanish operators! Contacts dried up after 45 minutes and I realised that I had become either a Mountain Faun [Mr Tumnus?] or a mountain satyr as I'd passed the 500 activator points mark and was half a goat. At this point I looked over the railings and saw an ibex below – a real mountain goat – so took this as a good sign. While I was on air, my wife and sons had a lovely lunch in the summit restaurant. I found them there and ate my sons' leftover Schnitzels and salad with a fresh glass of Weizenbier to celebrate. Then I received the £60 bill with a brave face !



Wendelstein - panorama looking SE round to NW

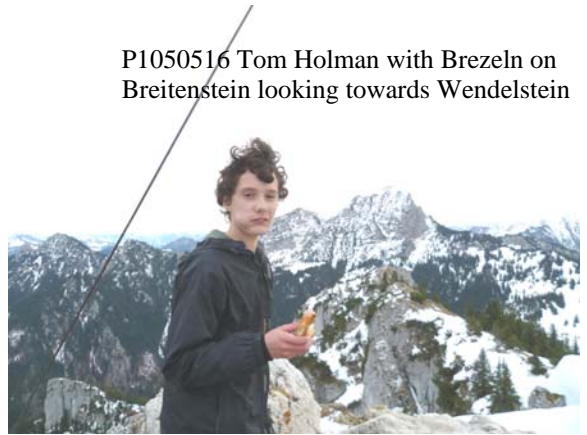
27 Dec 2012 DL/MF-070 Breitenstein - DL/M0YDH/P Points: 6 Bonus: 3

My eldest son and I climbed Breitenstein from Fischbachau- a mountain we could see from the balcony of our flat. It's the highest mountain that I've climbed to date and Thomas' first Alp. We caught the morning bus which was free to us as we had a Guest Card from Caritas and the Tourist office. This dropped us off in Birkenstein at the start of the path. The route was a strenuous climb on access roads in the forest which traversed the slope with hairpin bend corners. At the top of the road was our first ever alpine hut – the Kessel Alm. It had a good group of customers and we enjoyed a welcome drink in the homely, wood smoke filled interior. I stuck to Apfelschöler but all the locals were ordering rounds of beer at 1300m ASL!

From there we made the easy walk in the snow to the top of the pass. The next mountain along was the Wendelstein. It seemed almost within touching distance but was many hour's walk away. At the top of the pass there is a zig zag footpath up the face of the Breitenstein to its high hut - the Hubertus Haus. There were lots of people out and about. Some were admiring the view and a group were slugging back on the Schnapps. It was a 15 minute ascent to the summit crucifix. Excellent views again. Thomas used one of his Christmas presents and made a PMR contact with his brother

Peter back in Hundham from the summit. I moved a short way from the summit to the nearest patch of deep snow into which I shoved the antenna mast. We pegged the dipole ends out in the snow and began SOTA activity. Don G0RQL answered my CQ. There were 20 callers in total. G, GW, GI, EA, LA, OH, SM, SV. DX today was shared between Phillip VE1WT in Nova Scotia and Rich N4EX in Raleigh, NC.

P1050516 Tom Holman with Brezeln on Breitenstein looking towards Wendelstein



Schwarzenberg seen from Breitenstein



I could see a weather front eating up all the summits to the west and it looked like a snow storm was approaching.

Thomas and I packed up fast and set off for the pass without eating our lunch. In the downhill charge I lost one of my in-step crampons [see lost and found] but we made the forest road without incident.

The downhill was a slog for tired legs, eating lunch on the way.

By the time Thomas and I returned to Birkenstein, he looked shattered so I called his Opa [Grandad] to rescue him in the car.

I hope to return one day for a summer walking tour. This is spectacular country less than a day's travel by air.

Thanks to all callers. **73 es sd David M0YDH**

DL MF-090 Schwarzenberg summit

